

# TEEN DRIVER ROAD RULES



## Minnesota Laws for Newly Licensed Teen Drivers

Minnesota teen drivers are overrepresented in traffic crashes each year due to driver inexperience, distractions, nighttime driving, speeding and lack of seat belt use.

These laws help to minimize risks of injury or death.

# *Minnesota Teen Driver Road Rules*

## **Minnesota Graduated Driver's License Law**

To minimize risks of crashes, injury or death, Minnesota's graduated driver's licensing law helps teens hone their driving skills during the first year of licensure by reducing exposure to high-risk situations such as carrying teen passengers and

driving at night. Violating these laws is a misdemeanor.

These laws apply only to newly licensed teen drivers for the first six or 12 months, or until they reach age 18.

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### **Nighttime Driving Limitation**

For the first six months of licensure: Driving is prohibited midnight – 5 a.m.

Exemptions: Driving when accompanied by a licensed driver age 25 or older; driving between home and place of employment; driving to/from home and a school event for which the school has not provided transportation; driving for employment purposes.

The nighttime limitation is lifted after the first six months of licensure.

### **Passenger Limitations**

For the first six months of licensure: Only one passenger under age 20 is permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

For the second six months of licensure: No more than three passengers under age 20 are permitted, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Exemption: Passengers under age 20 who are members of the driver's immediate family are permitted.

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## **Other Teen Driver Laws**

### **Seat Belt Use**

Minnesota's seat belt law is a primary offense, meaning drivers and passengers of any age and in all seating positions must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint. Law enforcement will stop and ticket unbelted motorists or passengers. A seat belt ticket can cost more than \$100.

A seat belt is the best defense in case of a crash. Everyone in the vehicle must buckle up, regardless of seating position.

### **Cell Phone Use and Texting**

It is illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone, whether hand-held or hands-free — except to call 911 in an emergency. It is also illegal for drivers of all ages to compose or read text messages and emails, or access the Internet using a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic.

### **Drinking and Driving**

It is illegal for a person under age 21 to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol. Drivers under the legal drinking age with an alcohol-concentration of 0.08 or higher will face regular DWI laws and sanctions.

Consequences for underage drinking and driving are loss of license for at least 30 days and court fines.

Teen drivers with provisional licenses whose driving privileges are revoked from a crash or alcohol/controlled substance-related violation cannot regain driving privileges until age 18.

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## Parents' Role in Developing Safe Teen Drivers

- To minimize the risks of crashes, injuries and death, talk with your teen and establish clear and reasonable driving rules that favor safety over convenience. Follow through with established consequences if violations occur. Agree to be there for them to provide a safe ride anytime if needed.
- Monitor and train teen drivers — even after licensure. Teens need supervised exposure in a variety of driving conditions and environments.
- Be a positive role model: buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention, and don't drive aggressively.
- Encourage teens to speak up when they don't feel safe when driving or riding with others. Teens need to feel comfortable and confident to tell friends to buckle up, slow down, pay attention, or stop distractions.

## How to Qualify for a Full-Privileges License

The license holder must be at least 18 years of age, or:

- Held a provisional license for at least 12 consecutive months with no convictions for alcohol/controlled substance violations or crash-related moving violations, and with not more than one conviction for a moving violation that is not crash-related.
- If under 18, parent or legal guardian certifies that the applicant has driven under the supervision of a licensed driver at least 21 years of age for no less than 10 hours on the provisional license.

Learn more at [www.mndriveinfo.org](http://www.mndriveinfo.org).



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